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Dr. Daniel Ellsberg

Dear Dan:

Since we last talked, I have had a long talk about your situation with Tom Schelling, Janet and I have had dinner with Dick Neustadt, at which we discussed virtually nothing but your case, and Joe Nye and I have consulted with Graham Allison, getting a reading from him as to how to proceed, from his lofty perch as Dean of the Kennedy School. So tonight, as we pack for our long awaited week away from it all in the mountains, I write to you with the results of my Ellsbergian researches.

Let me begin with Tom Schelling and Dick Neustadt, whom you recommended I see first, who have known you for a very long time, and whose judgment I myself often consult and rely on. They agree totally: They have each asked me to say to you that they think coming to KSG or some other Harvard podium to announce the revelation, (and) the argument that goes with it, would be a mistake. Tom was especially insistent on this point. He said that he had talked to you at your 35th class reunion in June and that you told him you had gotten MacArthur money to pursue your book on nuclear crises. Tom said that after so many years of enforced service of the short term on the podium, he thought you were going to have a hard time, as anyone would, sitting down and wading through the material you know so well, and in some cases so uniquely, in order to once again play by the rules of academe. Dick agreed. He feels that your own best interests are just not served by first announcing the revelation, then having the academic community that knows the missile crisis evaluate it. As both Tom and Dick argued to me, this fundamentally inverts the scholarly process, which always proceeds from claim, to evaluation by the small community of people who claim to be able to evaluate the claim, to a published product in which the larger community is let in on the process, to, finally, the publication of the claim as fact to the whole world, if indeed we are dealing with something that is of interest to a great many people.

At the contentual level, both guys felt that your claim is very interesting, just as we both thought they would. Tom was especially intrigued, though even Tom could not quite fathom that you alone, among people knowledgeable about the Cuban missile crisis, should know about the event in question. He said he just could not believe that this was so, though he trusts you enough to keep an open mind on the subject. So does Dick, and so does Joe.

\* i.e., publication of a paper is always preceded by a seminar?!

Publication to "the world" is always after publication in a journal?!

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- are these Did Perle go through this? Did Harvard stand behind the correctness of his "news" or views?  
"lies"? What seminar speaker has been put through the "pre-seminar review process" on p. 2?

In other words, they would be very glad indeed to get together with you to discuss what you know, what you believe this means and the missile crisis generally.

I related to each of these men as strongly as I could your concern that this information be gotten into the debate around the time of the 25th anniversary of the crisis, as you and I had discussed. They responded in no uncertain terms by saying that, here again, this would defeat your long term goals, as well as put the Kennedy School and Harvard in an untenable position--of assuming that you are correct before really taking the time to evaluate whether this is so. And by "correct," I mean correct in your inferences about what the significance of the revelation is, as well as its actually having happened. As Tom said, with his typically cutting perspicacity, either it happened or it did not. If you are convinced that it did, then it probably did. But the real interest to Tom, and to the rest of the community who study this crisis and all nuclear crises, is in the interpretation of it, which is a necessarily much more deliberate, fuzzy and uncertain process. And they have to decide whether my intern is 'correct' before inviting me to give an open seminar!

In conversation with Tom, Dick, Joe and Graham (I could not reach Carl Kaysen), I arrived at this proposition. All agreed, in principle, so see what you think:

1. The very first thing that needs to be done is for you to write something out, even something very rough and ready, and send it to me. Maybe 10-15 pages would do it.

2. I would then send it around to the following people:

Tom Schelling  
Dick Neustadt  
Ernie May  
Carl Kaysen  
Graham Allison  
Joe Nye  
Steve Van Evera  
Sean Lynn-Jones  
Dave Welch

*Editors of International Security*  
*my co-author; Res. Fellow at this Center.*

3. I would consult these people and ask them whether they might like to bring you out to Harvard for an absolutely private seminar, led by you, and attended only by the people I have just listed, in addition to myself (and perhaps one or two others that we might agree upon, such as Ray Garthoff and Bill Hyland).

3. We would then have you out here for a seminar. CSIA would pay all your expenses.

4. You would take whatever you glean from the critical discussion of your position and revelation and transform it into something which you would submit to International Security. The exact form is discussable, but I could see a short document-like article, establishing the existence of the event in question, a short piece by you following this making your claims as to the significance

of your revelation, and commentary from a couple of us evaluating your claims.

5. After the appearance of the pieces in IS, the whole world will know, via our system of media contact, about it. At that point, of course, interviews, and other sorts of media happenings would be in order.

I think the thing that came up most often in my conversations with Dick and Tom is that some such step-wise sequence as this is, they feel, in your own best interest. It brings the community of your former and future colleagues in on the debate, to sharpen, criticize, question and elaborate. But since I am under the impression that this is what you want, I am confident that you will give your former colleagues and teachers a hearing. What do you think?

I understand that this is not quite the letter you thought you would get from yours truly. This is not the letter, to tell you the truth, that I thought I would write. But I had to consult these men, as you know. I cannot do anything at all, of an institutionally endorsed nature, without bringing them on board. Their basic message is this: If you want to be taken seriously by them, and by your former colleagues, you must refrain, for the time being, from stepping up on the podium and pronouncing. That is exactly how they put it. You ought, they told me to tell you, to understand that you must play by their rules if you want this thing to come out in a way that involves them and Harvard. Otherwise, they recommended I inform you, you are free to do as you please, knowing that they won't be party to it. I gather that Tom also had in mind something rather more specific in his effort to do right by you: He wants, I think, to encourage you to overcome your block against writing things out first. He really does, at least that is my impression. *Probably true, for Schelling, but doesn't meet October deadline; IMB*

One final thought. At dinner with Dick Neustadt a quite extraordinary thing happened. He suddenly said, roughly, "people of my generation cannot ever quite forgive Dan Ellsberg for leaking the Pentagon Papers. I respect his moral right to do so but I just cannot quite bring myself to see things his way." I responded that "people of our generation cannot quite bring ourselves to see Dan Ellsberg as anything other than a hero for doing exactly what he did." And we then had a wonderful dinner. It was quite a moment, as two views clashed and then decided to allow one another their freedom to exist. Further, we both agreed that this revelation is not like those in the Pentagon Papers, at least not in important respects. This is a historical point that needs first of all to be evaluated by scholars, not only because, but partly because it derives from the same man who gave us the Pentagon Papers. This, in other words--I am trying clumsily to say--is your chance finally, to bring people like Dick all the way around to a full acceptance of Daniel Ellsberg.

These are my thoughts for now. I'll be back in the saddle by September

16.

Sincerely yours (this goes for Janet as well),

Why would this process, or revelation, do that? (if that were the aim).